

2015

# College of Pharmacy Program Overview

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SPRING 2015

# NSU SHARKS

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY | COLLEGE OF PHARMACY



Student pharmacist  
Katie McCrink, class of 2018

## PREMIER ISSUE



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## **JUNE 26**

Florida Pharmacy Association  
annual meeting and alumni gathering  
St. Augustine, Florida

## **JULY 17–19**

Continuing Education—Physical Assessment  
Institute and alumni lunch/social  
NSU Davie campus

## **AUGUST 7–9**

Florida Society Health Systems'  
pharmacists and alumni gathering  
Orlando, Florida

## **SEPTEMBER 19–20**

Continuing Education—initial  
consultant and alumni lunch/social  
NSU Davie campus

## **OCTOBER 2**

American Pharmacist Month  
Distinguished Alumni Forum:  
“From student to alumni to professional”  
NSU Davie campus

## **NOVEMBER 7–8**

Continuing Education—fall classic  
and alumni lunch/social  
NSU Davie campus

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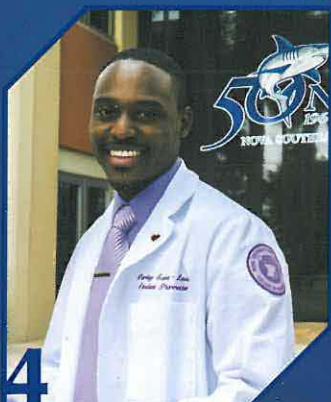
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with additional campuses in Palm Beach,  
Florida, and San Juan, Puerto Rico

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Welcome to the inaugural edition of *NSU Sharks Rx*,  
our new magazine for alumni, students, employees,  
and friends of the Nova Southeastern University College  
of Pharmacy! We look forward to providing you with the  
latest news from the college, including highlights of our  
alumni, updates on research, and achievements of our  
students and faculty and staff members. As you read this  
publication, I hope you feel the same pride in our college  
that I do, and that you, too, are awed by the amazing

accomplishments of our graduates, faculty members, and students.

As dean, one of my primary goals is to engage more closely with our alumni.  
I want all of our graduates to feel a sense of connection in their alma mater and a  
sense of belonging within our alumni community. To this end, we will hold a range  
of functions, continuing education seminars, and networking events to give alumni  
the opportunity to reconnect with the college, the faculty, and former classmates.  
Our alumni play a vital role in helping the college achieve its mission by holding  
leadership positions in the pharmacy community and by supporting the college at  
our events or assisting with the education of our students.

I would also like to take this time to update you on two important initiatives  
within the college: accreditation and strategic planning. Since my appointment as  
dean, we have spent many long hours preparing for our recent Accreditation Council  
for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) accreditation. The confidence we feel in the edu-  
cation we offer our students and the wonderful work done by faculty and staff  
members were verified by the recent decision of the ACPE Board of Directors to  
award the NSU College of Pharmacy a full eight-year accreditation term (until 2023)!  
Special thanks to Sandra Benavides, Pharm.D., our self-study chair, who worked  
tirelessly to ensure a complete and accurate narrative and a seamless on-site visit. We  
could not have achieved this level of excellence without the participation of all of our  
faculty, administration, support staff, students, and alumni.

Our next step is to develop a strategic plan, focusing on our strengths of entre-  
preneurship, courage, and innovation, to continue the college's upward trajectory.  
We are currently interviewing a number of our stakeholders as we work on a process  
entitled "Achieving our Shared Legacy" to identify our vision and develop a list of  
strategic initiatives to move us forward.

We are energized as we identify new ways to provide our students with an  
education and entrepreneurial opportunities to prepare them for the future practice  
of pharmacy.

I look forward to keeping in touch with everyone through *NSU Sharks Rx* and  
at our upcoming events. Please, send us your feedback, and submit your news for our  
alumni update section. Thank you for being a part of NSU's College of Pharmacy.

Go Sharks! Fins Up!

Lisa Deziel, Pharm.D., Ph.D.

Dean, College of Pharmacy  
Nova Southeastern University

FOLLOW NSU







Welcome to the inaugural issue of *NSU Sharks Rx*, a provocative name that is a fitting title for NSU's College of Pharmacy magazine.

*NSU Sharks Rx* fits in well with the 21st century, reflecting the forward-thinking education and research that is a hallmark of NSU's College of Pharmacy. It also, of course, honors our shark mascot, Razor.

The education offered by the College of Pharmacy has kept pace with the evolving role of the pharmacist, as these professionals are increasingly involved in the total health care of their patients.

Since its founding in 1987, NSU's College of Pharmacy has influenced the global community through its skilled alumni, dedicated faculty members, and hard-working students. When it opened, the college had the distinction of being the first pharmacy college in South Florida. Now, in addition to the main campus in Davie, we have a strong pharmacy presence at the Palm Beach and Puerto Rico Regional Campuses. More than 20,000 pharmacists have successfully completed the college's continuing education programs.

The College of Pharmacy is under the leadership of Dean Lisa Deziel, Pharm.D., Ph.D. A faculty member with the college since 1989, Dr. Deziel will continue to advance the college's already stellar national reputation as our innovation extends during our second 50 years.

This issue of *NSU Sharks Rx*—and the others that will follow—showcases the college's alumni, faculty members, and students, as well as the cutting-edge education, commitment to the community, and donors who assist in NSU's mission.

George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D.  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Nova Southeastern University

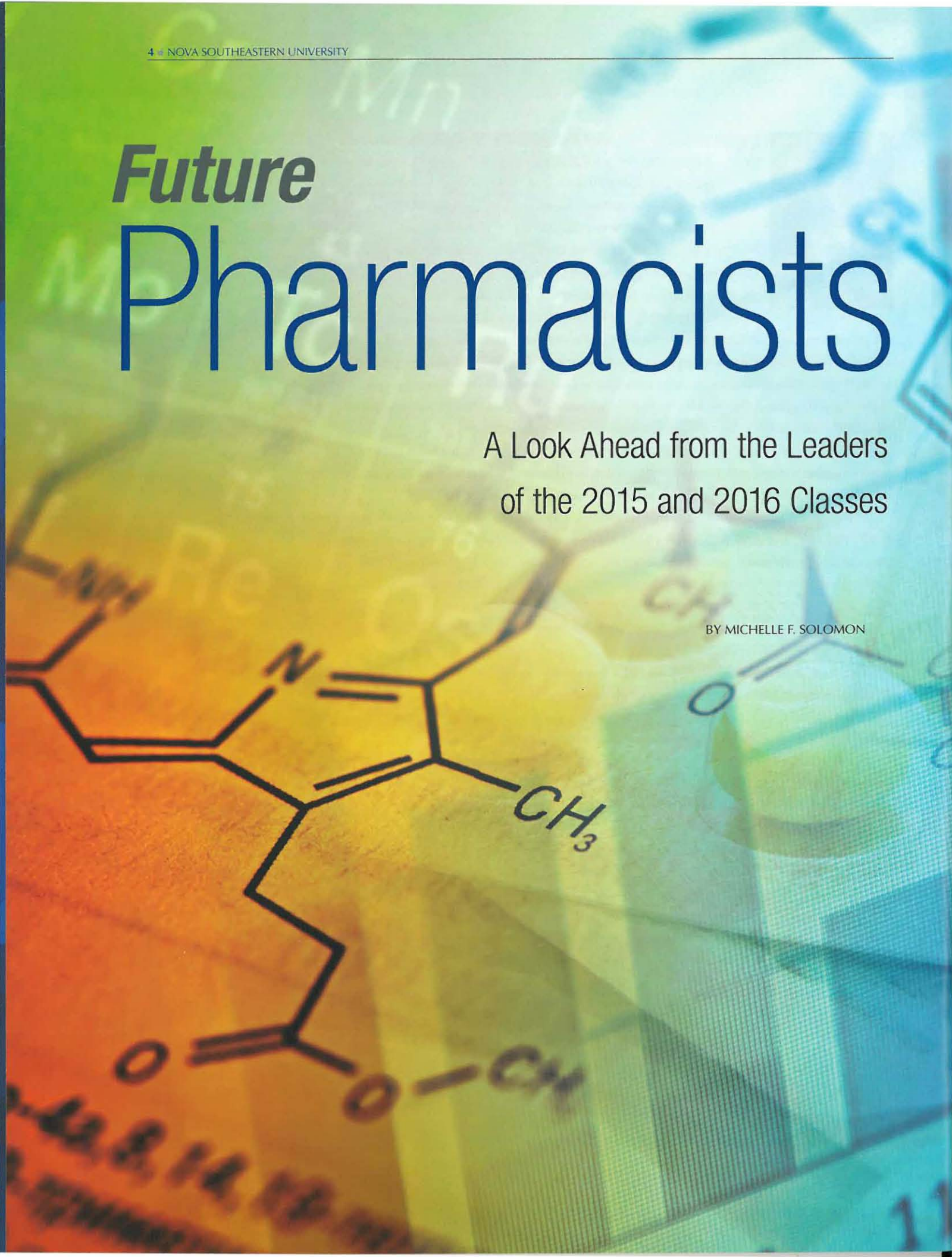




# *Future* Pharmacists

A Look Ahead from the Leaders  
of the 2015 and 2016 Classes

BY MICHELLE F. SOLOMON





**m**ehul Patel was born and raised in Limbe, Malawi, a small country in central Africa. When he was 18, he moved to South Africa to complete his bachelor's degree in pharmacy at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

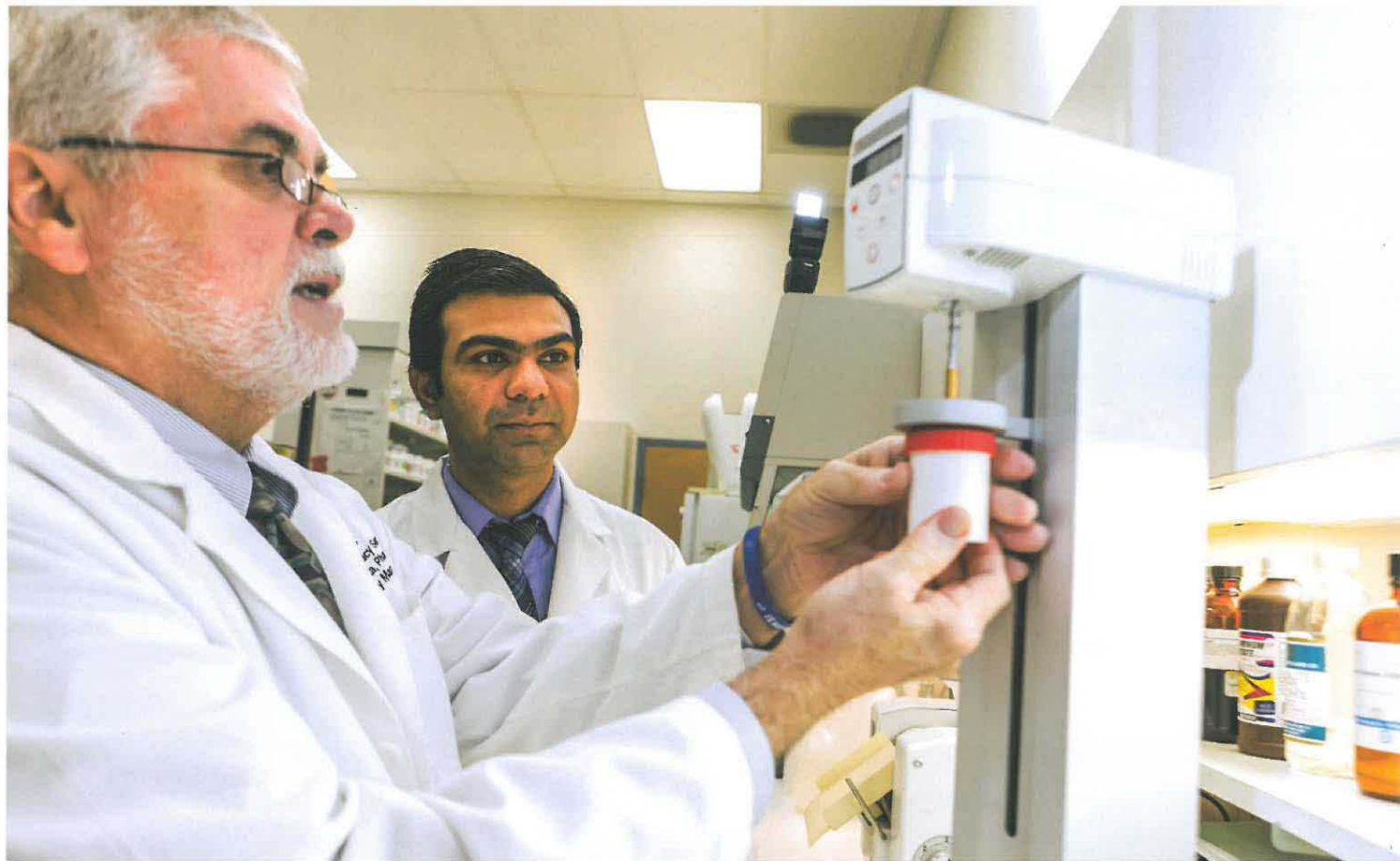
This year, Patel, who has been a member of the Dean's Ambassador Program for two years, will join 220 graduates as part of NSU's College of Pharmacy 2015 Pharm.D. graduating class. He and his colleagues will enter an entirely different era as practitioners than when NSU's College of Pharmacy (COP) admitted its first class in 1987.

The pharmacist's role has evolved during the past decade "from a profession that dispenses pharmaceutical products to one that helps patients make the best use of medications," according to a statement from the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP). "Research demonstrates that the inclusion of a pharmacist on a patient care team reduces medication-related errors, decreases overall health care costs, and improves the quality of care a patient receives," stated the society in one of its Issue Papers.

For Patel, who comes from a family of doctors, entering the medical profession was a "must" because of his background. Pharmacy satisfied his desire for a career that involved







more patient care, but, as he said, “with a business aspect to it.” Attending school in the states, and specifically NSU’s COP, broadened his view of the profession. “Pharmacy practice in Africa is still product focused. Emphasis is placed on chemistry and manufacturing. In the United States, pharmacy practice is more clinically focused with an emphasis on therapeutics. At NSU, I learned that pharmacists are appropriately qualified to be primary care providers,” said Patel.

ASHP states that colleges, like NSU’s College of Pharmacy, have kept pace with the expanding role of the pharmacist. The College of Pharmacy has continued to evolve since it began 28 years ago. The pharmacy program has expanded from admitting 49 students in its first class to an average of 220 students per year, and the Pharm.D. for international pharmacists represents more than 39 countries. NSU’s passing rates on pharmacy licensing exams—above 90 percent—continue to be strong. Residency and fellowship programs have been created in community pharmacy, psychiatry, ambulatory care, general pharmacy practice, HIV/infectious disease, pediatrics, informatics, and transition of care. NSU is one of the few pharmacy colleges in the United States that operates multiple pharmacies—a community pharmacy on campus and a hospital pharmacy at South Florida State Hospital, a facility in Pembroke Pines—where students gain practical knowledge. NSU’s College of Pharmacy now has the fourth-largest Pharm.D. program in the United States.

Nicole Jane Bernhardt, who will graduate in 2015 and is looking forward to her job as a staff pharmacist at CVS Health, embraces the value of her work-study experience at



*Top: Miguel Acosta, pharmacy manager, NSU Clinic Pharmacy (left), instructs student Bimal Patel at the community pharmacy, one of two pharmacies operated by the NSU College of Pharmacy.*

*Bottom: Mehul Patel, Pharm.D. class of 2015 and member of NSU College of Pharmacy Dean’s Ambassador Program, examines the pharmacy artifacts at the Health Museum of NSU’s Health Professions Division (located in the Terry Building).*

the COP. “During my time here, I worked under several professors in work-study situations,” she said. “These experiences even led to an opportunity to conduct research with the Sociobehavioral and Administrative Pharmacy Department, which resulted in getting an article published in a scholarly journal.” She says that being viewed by faculty members as a “future colleague rather than a student” made the opportunity even more impactful.

Bernhardt, who graduated from Florida International University with a degree in chemistry and a minor in criminal





Top: NSU College of Pharmacy is located in the Health Professions Division in the Terry Building on the university's Davie campus.

Bottom: Yogesh N. Joshi, left, a Ph.D. candidate, and Wenhui Zhou, above, are among the students at NSU preparing for their future pharmacy careers.



justice, decided to pursue a pharmacy degree after she realized she “did not want to work in a chemistry lab with instruments all day.” According to Bernhardt, “a career in pharmacy would allow me to utilize my chemistry background and still be able to interact with patients and make a difference.”

Chadwick Wynter said his COP training has given him the incentive to become an actively involved pharmacist. “As a practitioner, I hope to continue to expand the role of the pharmacist and promote more interdisciplinary health care teams and patient education,” said Wynter, who will graduate in 2016. “Becoming a pharmacist means you’ll become a leader. You are trusted by the community, and other health care professionals and patients look to you for advice. Pharmacy offers the chance for individuals to be innovative in the way we impact health care.”

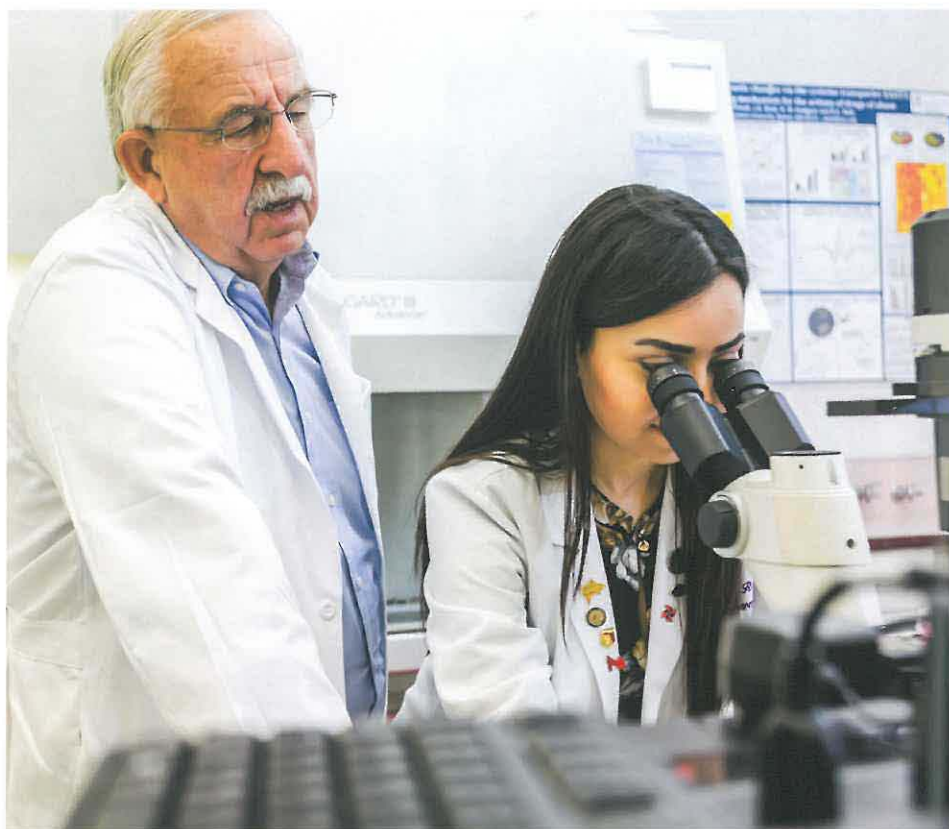
### Getting Involved

The college strongly supports student engagement in leadership and cocurricular activities. It has 18 student organizations that provide opportunities for the students to participate in activities outside of the classroom, and the groups sponsor events that promote leadership, advocacy, community, and practice.

Wynter already is a leader for the class of 2016. As president of NSU College of Pharmacy’s Student National Pharmaceutical Association (SNPhA) chapter, he encourages students to get involved with the school’s professional organizations. “Having an outstanding GPA is awesome, but being active and getting involved help you to grow as an individual, and you get to put into practice what you have learned in the classroom. I have had several incidents in which being the president of the organization has provided unique opportunities to me, which reaps benefits far beyond the books,” he said.

Melissa Santibanez, the class of 2015’s president of SNPhA, said her involvement with the chapter was crucial to her development as a pharmacy leader and as a student. “In a way, I grew up with SNPhA, because my involvement with that group began at the very start of my time in the Pharm.D. program,” she said.

Another 2016 Pharm.D. candidate, Navene Shata, serves as president of the college’s Student Government Association and is secretary of the college’s Phi Delta Chi Beta Lambda chapter, a professional, co-ed, pharmacy fraternity that has 89 chapters nationwide.



“As SGA president, I am the representative of the students, and I try my best to make sure that their time at NSU is the best they can have at any university. My true passion lies in advocacy and being the voice of others. With SGA, I am able to do exactly that,” said Shata, who was awarded the Sheila Tischenkel Endowment Scholarship.

*Continued on Page 10*





Opposite page, top: Richard C. Deth, professor, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, works with student Farima Fakheri Roaf.

Opposite page, bottom: Enrique Nieves, assistant professor, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, and student Juan Rivera-Pacheco are at the College of Pharmacy's Puerto Rico Regional Campus, which relocated to San Juan in August 2014.

This page, top: Brian Hierholzer (center), clinical assistant professor, Department of Pharmacy Practice, demonstrates injectables and inhalers to (from left) Jeffrey Jurkas, Sushmita Karki, Aiman Rahman, and Ryan Dunn.

This page, bottom: Navene Shata (second from left), Class of 2016 Pharm.D. candidate who serves as president of the college's Student Government Association, collaborates with Ph.D. and Pharm.D. students.

#### COLLEGE OF PHARMACY FAST FACTS

- The College of Pharmacy's Puerto Rico site relocated to the new Puerto Rico Regional Campus in San Juan in August 2014, from Ponce, where it had been since 2001.
- David Mastropietro, Ph.D., became the first graduate of the Doctor of Philosophy in Pharmaceutical Sciences program in August 2014, defending his dissertation "Design and Analysis of Novel Abuse Deterrent Formulations."
- More than 20,000 pharmacists worldwide have successfully completed the College of Pharmacy's continuing education programs for pharmacists.
- In this year's ASHP residency match, more than 40 NSU students were placed in residency positions around the United States.
- Rates for first-time candidates from NSU's College of Pharmacy taking the North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination (NAPLEX) and Multistate Pharmacy Jurisprudence Examination (MPJE) have consistently been above 90 percent.
- The Healing and Medicinal Garden, located at NSU's Davie campus, features the 66-foot, therapeutically stone-studded Reflexology Pathway, the longest of its kind in the United States.





In January, Shata was nominated by her peers as Student of the Month for her leadership skills, including her teaming up with representatives from the Shepard Broad Law Center and the College of Osteopathic Medicine to plan and lead Kick for a Cause, an HPD-wide charity kick ball tournament that was held in March.

Shata, who was born in Watertown, New York, but was raised both in the United States and in her parents' hometown of Port Said, Egypt, hopes to "ultimately work in regulatory affairs at a pharmaceutical company."

### Regional Campuses

Following its first decade in Palm Beach County, which was marked by the success of producing nearly 400 pharmacy graduates, NSU's Palm Beach Regional Campus moved into its 75,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility in Palm Beach Gardens in 2011.

Andrew Maher, a Pharm.D. candidate at the Palm Beach Regional Campus who will graduate in 2015, says the close-knit group at the campus gave him a different experience. "We're like a family. Many of us not only spend a lot of time together because of school and events, but also because many people are here away from their families. We have gotten to know each other very well, and we work as a team," said Maher.

The regional campuses in Palm Beach and in San Juan, Puerto Rico, both offer an individualized approach to learning, and the small class sizes in the Pharm.D. professional degree program are built to promote team building and long-lasting professional relationships.



Top: Robert (Robb) McGory, associate dean, Professional Program, with student Samantha Shaffer

Bottom: Andrea Levin (right), assistant professor, Department of Pharmacy Practice, supervises student Ngoc-Anh Chau taking a patient's blood pressure.

"I am usually shy," said Maher, "but with everyone being so encouraging here, I have felt a lot more confident and have had many opportunities to be social and be a leader." The future pharmacist and his colleagues created and lead the new organization Modern Entertainment Technology Association, which, he explains, plans, organizes, and hosts entertainment events for the Palm Beach Regional Campus pharmacy students, such as a game night. "The events are to help pharmacy students de-stress and take it easy while getting to know one another and have fun," said Maher.





Left: Hamid Omidian (right), assistant professor, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, does a demonstration with student Bhagmatie Lall.

Below, Left: The pharmacy program at the Palm Beach Regional Campus has produced nearly 400 graduates in the past decade. Jorge Varela, Pharm.D., professor at the campus, interacts with students.

Below: International Advanced Standing student Dorcas Boakye finds a quiet place to study on the main campus.

## Deciding Moments

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the increased demand for prescription medications will create the need for phar-

macists and pharmaceutical services with employment opportunities projected to grow through the year 2022. For many of NSU's Pharm.D. candidates, becoming a pharmacist has little to do with job prospects or the possibility of a six-figure salary.

"I have heard many people say that they just want to be a pharmacist



because you can make great money, but it's really a lot more than that," said Bernhardt.

Santibanez knew early on she wanted to be a pharmacist after her personal experiences growing up with a twin brother who had insulin-dependent diabetes. "The pharmacist's role with the general public is that of a medicines liaison. Pharmacists should use their knowledge in drug information and pharmacotherapeutics to help individuals understand the purpose behind medications and to help them make informed decisions about their health," she said.

The future pharmacist said it was "unacceptable" that, when her brother was diagnosed, only his endocrinologist was able to offer advice on medications. "During those initial years, no pharmacist ever explained his medications to any of us, including my parents, who were trying to comprehend and experience what it meant to care for someone living with diabetes. Since then, I have vowed never to ignore an opportunity to teach," Santibanez said.

For Shata, being a pharmacist will create a purpose for her life and her career. "I want to help people around the world who do not have access to the benefits of health care and, hopefully, be the voice of people in need," she proclaimed. ■



Stacia Schaefer will leave a legacy at the Palm Beach Regional campus when she graduates in 2015. The APhA-ASP PB chapter president initiated the Generation Rx program after attending the APhA-ASP Midyear Conference in 2011. "Starting the program was one of my greatest achievements at NSU. The program consisted of talking to middle school and high school-aged students about the misuse and abuse of prescription drugs," Schaefer said.

The national, educational program increases public awareness of prescription medication abuse and encourages health care providers, community leaders, parents, teens, and college students to actively work to prevent abuse.

During its initial year, the Palm Beach chapter gave presentations to more than 600 students and worked closely with the Palm Beach County Substance Abuse Coalition to conduct a survey regarding the proper disposal of unused prescription drugs.

Schaefer's work led to a national award from the Department of Public Health. Students at the Palm Beach Regional Campus continue to expand the outreach of Generation Rx to local schools and communities in Palm Beach.



# Alumni

## WALGREENS' RICHARD ASHWORTH CREDITS NSU FOR HIS WORK 'AGILITY'

BY MICHELLE F. SOLOMON

For Richard Ashworth, Pharm.D. ('99), making the switch from clinical pharmacist practitioner to management and leadership positions was a major decision. But Ashworth, who was named Walgreens' president of retail and pharmacy operations in September 2014, believed that, in a corporate leadership role, he could have a greater impact on how pharmacists can help people achieve wellness.

"In a position like this, I'm able to affect how care is delivered to patients across our more than 8,200 community pharmacies," said Ashworth, who was honored with the NSU 2014 Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award to recognize alumni who have made outstanding contributions to their professions and/or community and are committed to advancing the university's values and goals. The awards are the most prestigious honor that the university presents to its graduates. In addition, Ashworth was named *Alumnus of the Year* by the College of Pharmacy, and he serves on the College of Pharmacy Dean's Advisory Board.

Ashworth has been with Walgreens since he was in his teens growing up in Daytona Beach, Florida. "I started at Walgreens when I was a kid in high school because I needed a little bit of money. The store was right across the street from where I went to school. I was what they called a stock boy back then."

### THROUGH THE RANKS

From stock boy to corporate executive, pharmacy remains at the core of Ashworth's passion—most especially the community pharmacy and its fundamental role in the health and well-being of a community. "A pharmacy is all about helping patients achieve improved health and better well-being," said Ashworth. "So it can't be just about tablets in a bottle or boxes with stickers on them. That's logistical. That's not what pharmacy is about. Pharmacy is about making a difference in people's lives."

His voice takes on an even more reverent tone as he discusses his profession. "The pharmacist is a trusted resource that is local

and that is, quite frankly, free," Ashworth said. "Anyone can walk into any pharmacy, whether it is Walgreens or another pharmacy, and get advice—legitimate, confidential advice from someone who has the knowledge and expertise to deliver it. And community pharmacy is exactly that—it's about being part of the community."

To make his point, Ashworth recalls when he was a pharmacist in Boca Raton—yes, at a Walgreens. "The people we were helping were the same people we went to church with, went to school with, went to the movies with; we were part of each other's lives."

The connection the pharmacist had with the community was what the young stock boy saw, and he now says it influenced his future. "There was a pharmacist named Rick at the store, and it was fascinating for me to watch him interact with customers. The way he was trusted and the way he really helped people was what helped me decide I wanted to be a pharmacist. I wanted to help in that way," said Ashworth.

After high school graduation and a year at Palm Beach Atlantic College, he decided to move further south and began studies at Southeastern University of the

Health Sciences in North Miami Beach (in 1994, Nova University merged with Southeastern to become Nova Southeastern University). "I started off at the old campus when it was just Southeastern; the next year, we moved to the campus in Davie," he explained.

From the first day, Ashworth felt like he had found the perfect fit. "I loved the way NSU was presenting itself, which was this progressive place that didn't just follow all the rules. It felt more agile and more hip in its learning environment and curriculum. And it turned out to be true," said Ashworth. "It was definitely a fun place to be, but it also was a place that gave me confidence and the skills required to become a really good pharmacist."

He also met his mentor and wife while there. Jennifer Bond Ashworth, Pharm.D., graduated from Nova Southeastern University's College of Pharmacy in 1998. "She was a year ahead



*Richard Ashworth was honored with NSU's 2014 Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award.*



*Richard Ashworth, second from left, was honored as NSU College of Pharmacy's Alumni of Distinction. Attending the ceremony are, from left, Anne-Marie Aldrich of Walgreens; Ashworth; Jennifer Ashworth, Pharm.D.; Roy Ripak of Walgreens; Lisa Deziel, dean of the College of Pharmacy; Patrick Hawthorne, R.Ph., 1994; Georgia Lehoczyk of Walgreens; and Victor Lehoczyk.*



of me in pharmacy school and has been my partner ever since," Ashworth said. "We got married right before I graduated and right after she graduated. She was, and is, a very good inspiration to me."

He credits his ascension, too, from stock boy and sales clerk to Walgreens leadership positions—pharmacy supervisor, district manager, and three vice president roles—to the "agility" NSU instilled in him. "It gave me a progressive education that was founded in the community as well as the classroom," Ashworth said.

## GOING GLOBAL

Before undertaking his current position, which has him based in Deerfield, Illinois, at Walgreens corporate headquarters, Ashworth was in the United Kingdom for nine months. He was director of Healthcare, Health, and Beauty for the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland for Boots UK. He helped lay the foundation for Walgreens and Alliance Boots to create the first global pharmacy-led enterprise for health and well-being. "I focused on maximizing the potential between two iconic brands, Walgreens and Alliance Boots," he said.

Walgreens' merger with Alliance Boots, Europe's largest pharmacy chain, created Walgreens Boots Alliance, which marked its first week in January 2015 as a new public company, trading on NASDAQ with the ticker symbol WBA.

In his more than a decade of being immersed in the field of pharmacy, Ashworth says he has witnessed many a challenge for today's pharmacist. "It has to do with the evolving landscape of health care and the patient," he said. "It's important that the role of the pharmacist continue to advance to meet changing needs."

Following his own idea of remaining relevant, two years after receiving his Pharm.D., Ashworth enrolled in the University of Phoenix to complete his Master in Business Administration. In 2004, he received his M.B.A.

"It was a way for me to understand the financial side of running a community pharmacy; the Pharm.D. provides balance with that," he said. "Yes, we're dealing with a global business, but more importantly, we're in the business of taking care of patients and, really, their lives. That is the balance that needs to remain."

Ashworth encourages anyone with a passion for pharmacy to pursue it and, for those with varied interests, to consider a

dual degree. He believes that, because of NSU's somewhat "nontraditional" approach to studies, it's the perfect opportunity to help future pharmacists "realize their purpose."

## TRYING IT ON FOR SIZE

He also advocates trying out different areas of the pharmaceutical profession as a litmus test to make sure that the lifestyle and balance that the workplace provides "reconciles with your personal beliefs." At Walgreens, that litmus test can also result in financial assistance toward tuition.

The Walgreens Pharmacy Student Professional Educational Assistance Program, which offers \$2,500 per year for each year that a student participates, is available to pharmacy students attending their last four years of pharmacy school. The requirements are that the student be a past or present Walgreens employee and, after graduating from pharmacy school, he or she must remain employed with Walgreens on a full-time basis as a pharmacist for the same number of years that he or she participated in the program.

Additionally, nearly 100 NSU students received individual scholarships from Walgreens. The company also has donated more than \$1 million each year since 2008 to accredited pharmacy schools, including NSU's College of Pharmacy, to help support diversity initiatives.

"Working for Walgreens, championing everyone's right to be happy and healthy, is a purpose that resounds with me personally. It's why I do the job. And, when you have a purpose, when you know what your purpose in life is, it opens up any door you want to go through, which is what happened to me," said Ashworth. "I was expecting to remain a pharmacist—I loved it—but now I'm running all of the operations for a very well-known and respected organization. With that comes a lot of responsibility, but also a lot of excitement and opportunity." ■



# Message from the Chancellor



Welcome to the inaugural edition of the NSU College of Pharmacy magazine, *NSU Sharks Rx*.

As a pharmacist and a founding member of the college, I have a special affinity for the College of Pharmacy and have enjoyed being a part of its success. We have achieved a great deal since our first entering

class in 1987, and this magazine will provide a mechanism to inform you of all of the wonderful things being accomplished by our students, faculty and staff members, and alumni!

NSU's Vision 2020 and the bright future it predicts for our university is becoming a reality. Construction is underway on the Center for Collaborative Research, a 215,000-square-foot facility that will help us meet our goals of being recognized on a national and global level as a highly productive research university. This building not only represents NSU's commitment to research, but is on the cusp of what the future holds.

The progress does not stop with the construction of the Center for Collaborative Research on NSU's Davie campus. Construction also is underway on what we expect will eventually become a hospital complex run by Hospital Corporation of America (HCA) East Florida in the neighboring University Park Plaza. The first step is an emergency room that is scheduled to open this summer.

This footprint shall be the predecessor of a new, 200-bed hospital at NSU, opening the doors to research collaboration and teaching opportunities for our students and faculty members. These projects illustrate NSU's progress toward becoming a nationally recognized and preeminent institution of research and higher learning. And, of course, this will only make your degree and your alumni base stronger.

None of this could have become a reality without support from our alumni and friends. The NSU family continues to be the core of our university.

Frederick Lippman, R.Ph., Ed.D.  
Chancellor, Health Professions Division

## HPD News

### HPD CHANCELLOR APPOINTED TO FLORIDA TAXWATCH ADVISORY BOARD

Fred Lippman, R.Ph., Ed.D., chancellor of NSU's Health Professions Division, has been appointed to the advisory board of Florida TaxWatch's Center for Florida Citizenship (CFC). Lippman also serves as a board member of Florida TaxWatch.

The advisory board is composed of business and community leaders with knowledge and experience to provide Florida TaxWatch's expert staff with ideas and guidance in doing CFC research and policy formulation.

"Through his involvement with the Center for Florida Citizenship, Dr. Lippman will have an opportunity to use his knowledge and experience to bring about meaningful changes in the way Floridians engage and communicate with government officials," said Dominic M. Calabro, president and CEO of Florida TaxWatch.

Florida TaxWatch is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan research institute widely recognized as the watchdog of citizens' tax dollars for more than 33 years.

As chancellor of NSU's Health Professions Division, Lippman is responsible for overseeing seven colleges—dental medicine,

health care sciences, medical sciences, nursing, optometry, osteopathic medicine, and pharmacy.

Lippman joined the Southeastern University College of Pharmacy in 1987 as vice president for pharmaceutical affairs. In 1989, he was promoted to vice president for external affairs for Southeastern University of the Health Sciences, which merged with Nova University in 1994 to create NSU. He was appointed chancellor of NSU's Health Professions Division in 2004.

Prior to his career in academia, Lippman served as a community pharmacist for more than 20 years. He has been widely recognized by academic and health care societies and has held important leadership positions in professional organizations.

Lippman served as a member of the Florida House of Representatives from 1978 to 1998 and was widely respected for championing legislation to protect children and senior citizens and to improve Florida's health care system.

Lippman received his degree in pharmaceutical sciences at Columbia University College of Pharmacy and holds a doctorate in higher education administration from NSU. ■



A molecular model featuring several blue, glossy spheres connected by black rods, set against a light blue background. The spheres are arranged in a network, with some rods extending from the spheres.

# Making an Impact

BY NANCY MCVICAR AND MICHELLE F. SOLOMON

## working to defeat cancer at the molecular level

Growing up in Waterbury, Connecticut, Jean Johanna Latimer thought she wanted to be a scientist, or maybe a journalist. Then a friend in her grammar school class was diagnosed with leukemia and later died from the disease. Witnessing her friend's illness made Latimer want to go into research to help end such suffering, she said.

"I realized where I should put my energies," said Latimer, an associate professor in NSU's





College of Pharmacy, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences.

So, instead of being an investigative journalist, she is investigating ways to defeat cancer at the molecular level. She uses her writing skills for medical manuscripts and persuasive grant applications, seeking continued funding for her work. After earning a B.A. in Cellular Biology from Cornell University, she received her Ph.D. in Molecular and Cellular Biology from the State University of New York—Buffalo, at the Roswell Park Cancer Institute, where she met geneticist Stephen Grant, who would later become her husband.

The researchers spent several productive years on breast cancer research at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center before arriving at NSU's College of Pharmacy in 2011. They sometimes work as a team, and their areas of expertise complement one another. "As a geneticist, I work on the damage to the genome that causes cancer, and Jean works on the mechanisms that repair it," said Grant, Ph.D., associate professor of public health at NSU's College of Osteopathic Medicine.

NSU's College of Pharmacy was a perfect fit for several reasons, Latimer said. The recession was shrinking research efforts in the Northeast, while NSU's research program was growing; also, she loves teaching and is able to do that here. Additionally,



*Jean Latimer, top and opposite page, and her COP team often coordinate their research with other NSU researchers, including Jose Lopez (bottom, right), from NSU's Oceanographic Center.*

South Florida has a more diverse population than Pittsburgh, offering more patients with an unusual kind of breast cancer called triple-negative. Those tumors are more aggressive and don't respond to the most effective therapies currently available, she said.

"For many decades, we treated breast cancer as if it were all one disease. Now we know there are at least seven types. Triple-negative is intrinsically more aggressive, and it is also the type for which we have the fewest targeted treatments," she said.

Of the nearly 200,000 new breast cancer cases each year, about 85 percent arise sporadically, while only about 15 percent occur because of a genetic predisposition, Latimer said. About 40 percent of breast cancer cases in African American women are





triple-negative, but only about 17 percent in European white women, mostly descendants of Ashkenazi Jews. Hispanic women also manifest triple-negative breast cancer, but not as frequently as African American women.

Latimer's and Grant's recent paper showing that DNA repair is very high in the heart and undetectable in the brain (as well as six other tissues) illustrates this ability using murine tissues. Two NSU pharmacy students, Vongai Majekwana and Yashira Pabon-Padin, participated in this study and were authors on the paper.

### Environmental, Cultural Factors

Latimer's laboratory has approximately 125 breast tissue cell lines that she created from patients—including normal tissue derived from women who had breast reduction surgeries, and tumor lines—including 13 triple-negative tumors from European white and African American patients. Her goal is to use these cultures for drug development and discovery. "We're interested in studying ancestral diversity in breast development and breast cancer," she said.

Latimer and Grant recently teamed up with Jose Lopez, Ph.D., from the NSU Oceanographic Center, in a project to look at the impact of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill on normal breast cultures and on shrimp that humans consume. "Environmental exposure is a significant contributor to 85 percent of all breast cancers," said Latimer.

For 2014–2015, Latimer and her College of Pharmacy team—which includes Grant and graduate students Manasi Pimpley, Omar Ibrahim, and Homood As Sobeai—received a President's Faculty Research and Development Grant to further their development of a unique method of using cultural human breast epithelial cells, both normal and malignant.

"We propose to use nontumor-adjacent cell explants as the basis for development of an assay that tests environmental chemicals directly for the ability to 'transform' breast cells into malignancy," she explained in her abstract. The new test will inexpensively establish that a chemical can "transform" a human breast epithelial cell to malignancy in culture, according to the abstract.

"Cancer is dealt with by the medical community after it has already developed. Our research is driven by defeating it, and part of defeating it is to find out the causes and how to prevent it," she said.

Her research at NSU is an extension of the work she began years ago in Pittsburgh. There, Latimer, Grant, and a team of researchers determined that breast cancers that arise sporadically, rather than through inheritance of certain genes, start with defects of DNA repair mechanisms.

The study, published in 2010 in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, showed that potent chemotherapy drugs that target DNA in later-stage cancers could be an effective way to treat the earliest of breast tumors. The research also found that breast cells do not repair everyday damage to DNA as well as other tissues, such as skin, so the breast is a particularly vulnerable tissue to environmental toxins. This has led to new research exploring ways to improve the cells' protective abilities, with the hope of reducing the number of breast cancer cases.

"DNA repair is a process that occurs 24 hours a day, seven days a week in the nucleus of every one of your cells, to reverse DNA damage," Latimer said. The damage can occur because of exposure to radiation, chemicals, and other environmental factors, she added. "The more this damage occurs, the more likely these cells are to become a cancer cell," but most take 30 years or more to develop, she said.

Another important area of their research involves tumor stem cells, which are more resistant to treatment than tumor cells. "If you kill the stem cells, the tumor will peter out, because without stem cells it cannot live. We're working on an approach that doctors are waiting for," Grant said.

"We scientists are the ultimate purveyors of hope," Latimer said. "We believe in what we're doing."

The couple's 13-year-old daughter, Schaefer (her grandmother's maiden name), attends NSU's University School. Latimer has told Schaefer that if her friends ask what her parents do, "she should say we work for mankind. We've told her she doesn't have to be a scientist, but she has to do something to help mankind." ■



# Alumni

## PABLO L. APONTE: FAMILY MATTERS A MAJOR PART OF PHARMACY

BY MICHELLE F. SOLOMON

Pablo L. Aponte's parents are both pharmacists, but they advised their son not to follow in their footsteps.

"They told me not to go into pharmacy because they both worked too much," said Aponte, Pharm.D., about what his father, Luis, and his mother, Ana, told him. Both were graduates of the School of Pharmacy at the University of Puerto Rico, class of 1981. In 1985, the couple opened Farmacia Villa Carmen in Caguas, Puerto Rico, about 20 miles south of the capital city, San Juan. "They have opened the doors of the pharmacy every single day for 28 years," said Aponte with pride.

When he was 16, Aponte said that he had an accident while driving his father's new car. He went to work in the family pharmacy to help pay for the damaged car. "I started working in the front of the store, getting the supplies from the storage area. I began to like it. Then I moved into the dispensing area, where I would gather supplies for that area," he said.

After high school graduation, Aponte was accepted to Purdue University's pre-pharmacy program in Indiana, so he moved to the United States and graduated from the school in 2004. "I began looking into pharmacy schools and NSU came up in my search. And when I started looking into the origins, I realized that NSU had professors who had Purdue backgrounds."

He cites Andres Malavé, Ph.D., the executive director of NSU's Puerto Rico Regional Campus and former dean of the College of Pharmacy, who received Ph.D. degrees in pharmacology and toxicology from Purdue University. "I discovered a [research] paper that Dr. Malavé had written—and there were other connections to Purdue and NSU through this paper," Aponte said.

He also discovered that Appu Rathinavelu, Ph.D., former chairman of the Department of Pharmaceutical and Administrative Sciences at NSU's College of Pharmacy, had conducted his postdoctoral training at Purdue. Rathinavelu is currently the associate dean for institutional planning and development at the College of Pharmacy and executive director of NSU's Rumbaugh-Goodwin Institute for Cancer Research.



For Aponte, the Purdue-NSU connection was like a seal of approval.

But what was most appealing was that he could study at NSU's Puerto Rico location, which, at the time, was located on the campus of Pontifical Catholic University in Ponce, Puerto Rico's second largest city. NSU's Puerto Rico Regional Campus moved to San Juan in spring 2014.

"That I could get the same degree in my home country as studying in the United States was so beneficial for me. It would give me the opportunity to be not too far from home," said Aponte, who adds that the Ponce location was about an hour from his hometown and his parents' pharmacy.

"It was about my commitment to be back home. I had friends who studied in the United States and stayed there, but I really wanted to come back here."

While he was at the school, Aponte immersed himself not only in his studies, but in student organizations. Because NSU's College of Pharmacy program was quite new in Puerto Rico, he wanted to be active and participate. He was the Ponce, Puerto Rico, site representative for the NSU College of Pharmacy Student Government Association for two years and became the NSU-COP Class of 2008 Ponce, Puerto Rico, site president. "We had a lot of projects, and I was very involved," he said.

As part of his education, Aponte came to the United States to do pharmacy practice experience at the Cleveland Clinic Hospital in Fort Lauderdale, working in administration. He also worked in internal medicine at Broward General Medical Center. In 2007, he did a pharmacy practice experience at Compounding Docs, Inc., in Boca Raton and worked in ambulatory care at Coral Springs Medical Center. He returned to Caguas, Puerto Rico, where he worked in pediatrics at Hospital Interamericano de Medicina Avanzado (HIMA) and at NSU's Drug Information Center in Ponce.

He graduated from Nova Southeastern University's College of Pharmacy in Ponce, Puerto Rico, in May of 2008, receiving his Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) degree. But he didn't enter the family business right away. He came back to the United



*Pablo L. Aponte, right, embraces his parents' desire to have a true family pharmacy in Caguas, Puerto Rico, whether he is offering personal care to his patients or working with his staff. The Farmacia Villa Carmen "is really part of the community," said Aponte, who also relishes his role as a pharmacist preceptor for NSU's College of Pharmacy.*

States and worked as a graduate intern at a Walgreens in Fort Lauderdale.

"I started out working in Florida, and one day, I woke up and I wasn't feeling like I was fulfilling my purpose. I got a plane ticket and came back to Puerto Rico. I immediately had six interviews in different places," said Aponte, who took a job as a clinical pharmacist in pediatric oncology at HIMA in Caguas, Puerto Rico.

"I liked it very much. I had the chance to do oncology and pediatrics, and then I moved everywhere in the hospital—intensive care, renal care, respiratory care. I learned much there," he added.

After about three years, Aponte was starting again to feel that maybe there was more to accomplish, so he joined Cardinal Health as a system clinical manager.

"I liked their mission. They had good intentions. At these hospitals, we were starting something new. Puerto Rico has very good, developed areas, but the health care around the center of the island needed updated guidelines to be up to the standards.

"So the idea was that the pharmacy departments at the hospitals would act as leaders in health care. We went to hospitals and started protocols. At some of the hospitals I went to, they were not familiar as to what a Pharm.D. was, so it was my time to initiate structures that people could follow and that eventually would make health care better," Aponte said.

It was the business side of pharmacy that ignited Aponte's passion and, in May 2011, he joined the family business. He continues to embrace his parents' desire to have a true family pharmacy, yet he believes that there are ways to implement some modern ideas without sacrificing Farmacia Villa Carmen's personal care. "This pharmacy is really part of the community," said Aponte.

And he continues to find 21st-century ways to connect with the community. He has implemented a computer program that creates automated refills. "It creates more confidence with transactions," Aponte said.

The pharmacy has begun deliveries to nursing homes and one of his goals for this year is to start delivery to patients' homes. He also started a Facebook page for fans to follow Farmacia Villa Carmen, which he proudly said, has more than 2,000 followers since he started it in October 2014.

"When you go to pharmacy school, it can be very clinically oriented—that is part of it. But running a pharmacy is operating a business. It's not all about the money, but it's the business of



health care, and that is something that needs to be paid attention to, otherwise, there will be no business," he said.

Licensed as a pharmacist both in Florida and Puerto Rico, Aponte is acutely aware of the business of pharmacy and the need to be alert to all of what he said are "the many changes happening" and the new regulations. Through his many experiences in hospital settings and as an independent pharmacist, Aponte has relished his role as one of the more than 800 pharmacist preceptors teaching students in various practice settings for NSU's College of Pharmacy.

"I want students who come here to learn and know patient care, but also understand every aspect of a pharmacy—drug costs, how we get reimbursed. When they intern for some pharmacies, sometimes they are just shown how to do prescriptions or count medications. But here, they can see how the experience is different, how we treat employees, and how everyone knows each other. They develop relationships, so that they really get to know the people they are caring for—whose prescriptions they are filling and the responsibility that brings."

He also instills in his students that pharmacy isn't just about fixing problems that already exist in patients, and he hopes to instill in them that they need to become models for good health. "A year and a half ago, I got into running. I was a scuba diver, so I knew I liked swimming. I also liked biking," he said. Aponte ended up participating in the IRONMAN Chattanooga last September, which included a 2.4-mile swim in the Tennessee River, a 116-mile bike course, and a 26.2-mile run.

"It's been a journey of organizing my time and training sessions, and when I have the students, something I do is take them to an outdoor activity. I have them run a 5K, or make it part of their training to be a volunteer at one of these activities. Health care isn't all about medication, health care should be about promoting a whole and healthy lifestyle," he said. ■



# NEW LEADERS

COLLEGE OF PHARMACY CONTINUES TO ATTRACT EXPERTS WHO ARE TOP IN THEIR FIELDS

**ROBERT (ROBB) MCGORY, M.S., Pharm.D.**, has been named the associate dean of the Professional Program. McGory brings a varied history as a practicing pharmacist, educator, researcher, and administrator to his new role. In this position, he will work closely with Lisa Deziel, Pharm.D., Ph.D., dean of NSU's College of Pharmacy (COP); the college's executive team; and faculty members to maintain quality education for student pharmacists and to expand the COP's influence within the profession of pharmacy.

McGory initially trained as a microbiologist, receiving a bachelor's degree in science from Cornell University. He received both his Master of Science in Microbiology and a Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy from the University of Kentucky and his Pharm.D. degree from the University of Minnesota. Following his education, McGory began building patient-centered pharmacy services for several teaching hospitals as well as teaching therapeutic principles for several pharmacy and medicine programs.

McGory has provided patient care as a member of various medical, surgical, and critical care programs. He has established pharmacokinetic monitoring services and nutrition support consultation services and a research program with the Solid Organ Transplantation Department at the University of Virginia. McGory's research in the pharmacokinetic properties of Hepatitis B Immune Globulin in post-liver transplant

patients led to the first successful effort to protect liver recipients from reinfection of the hepatic allograft following transplantation for Hepatitis B virus-induced cirrhosis. This resulted in McGory being awarded an endowed chair of Transplantation Pharmacology through the Department of Surgery at the University of Virginia.

In addition to clinical training of medical and surgical residents, McGory has held faculty appointments with the colleges of pharmacy at North Dakota State University, Western University of Health Sciences, and Northeast Ohio Medical University. He has also been instrumental in establishing or expanding American Society of Health System Pharmacists-accredited PGY1 residencies at the University of Virginia and Indian River Medical Center in Vero Beach, Florida.

His background as a practitioner, educator, and researcher led to his transition as an administrator. McGory was the first chair of pharmacy practice at



Western University of Health Sciences and then was the founding executive associate dean of the College of Pharmacy of Northeast Ohio Medical University, where he guided accreditation, curriculum development, admissions, and assessment. Most recently, McGory was the director of pharmacy at Indian River Medical Center, where he successfully proved that incorporating pharmacists-in-training—students and residents—as providers could maintain and expand patient-centered services.



**PETER (PETE) GANNETT, Ph.D.,**

has assumed the position of associate dean of Graduate Education and Research. Gannett obtained his Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of Wisconsin in 1982. He received additional training as a postdoctoral fellow, first in the College of Pharmacy, University of Wisconsin, in 1982, and then at the Eppley Cancer Research Institute at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in 1985. In 1990, he was named medicinal chemist at the School of Pharmacy, West Virginia University. He was tenured in 1994, promoted to full professor in 2000, and was named the Robert C. Byrd Distinguished Professor of Medicinal Chemistry from 2010 to 2015.

Gannett has twice served as the interim department chair of Pharmaceutical Sciences and the interim associate dean of Graduate Research and Education at the School of Pharmacy at West Virginia University. From 2003 to 2014,



he was instrumental in developing an interdisciplinary, nanoscience research and graduate education program spanning all of West Virginia University. Simultaneously, he was the principal investigator on three different university-wide, interdisciplinary, graduate-student training programs.

During the course of his research career, Gannett has studied the structure and conformation of DNA, especially of DNA modified due to the metabolism of aryl hydrazines, and the consequences with respect to disease. A second research area of interest is the interplay of structure and function of cytochrome P450 with respect to drug design, metabolism, and electron transfer. A third research area is the development and use of nanotechnology for the study of biological problems.

In all research areas, he has utilized computational methods for the analysis of biological molecules, drug design, and drug development.

**RENEE S. JONES, Pharm.D., CPH,**

has been appointed the director of Preceptor Development and an assistant professor. Jones received her Doctor of Pharmacy degree at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, where she also completed her postgraduate training in HIV medicine. As the pharmacy operations supervisor/clinical pharmacy coordinator of Broward Health Medical Center, Jones focused on improving patient care, containing cost, and designing operational plans for 48 pharmacists and 45 technicians. She successfully promoted safe practices, optimized patient care, and generated revenue by developing policies and procedures, preprinted order forms, clinical pharmacy services, and financial initiatives.

In less than two years, through her initiatives, Jones generated significant revenue and cost savings at Broward Health Medical Center, a 716-bed facility. She also was accountable for evaluating automated medication dispensing pyxis reports and narcotic inventories, action plans for

cost savings strategies, and improvement of employee satisfaction scores.

At Broward Health Medical Center, Jones also was accountable for control substances and acquisition of narcotics on an ongoing basis. Additionally, her efforts helped the health center's expansion of the American Society of Health System Pharmacists-accredited pharmacy residency program from one to four residents. She also helped with the modification of clinical pharmacist duties and staffing requirements, which led to a 90-percent retention of pharmaceutical staff.



Jones also spearheaded the implementation and ongoing quality assurance of guidelines for the preparation of pharmaceutical agents. As a clinical assistant pro-

fessor at Rutgers University, Jones' core responsibilities were to guide fourth-year Pharm.D. candidates on clinical rotations, teach didactic courses such as Infectious Disease Therapeutics, and co-coordinate an elective course.



# Pharmacy News



## COLLEGE OF PHARMACY ASSISTANT DEAN APPOINTED TO FLORIDA BOARD

Goar Alvarez, Pharm.D., C.Ph., FASCP, assistant dean of NSU's College of Pharmacy (above, left), is serving on the Florida Board of Pharmacy, having been appointed by Governor Rick Scott. Alvarez's term ends on October 31, 2017.

Alvarez is past speaker of the House of Delegates of the Florida Pharmacy Association and its past president. He is also the 2002 recipient of the James H. Beal Pharmacist of the Year award. He joined NSU in 1999 and has served as director of pharmacy services and assistant professor of pharmacy administration.

"We are proud of Dr. Alvarez for his work on behalf of the students, faculty, and patients at Nova Southeastern University and know he will be of great service to the pharmacy community and the citizens of Florida as a member of the Florida Board of Pharmacy," said Lisa Deziel, Pharm.D., Ph.D., dean of the NSU College of Pharmacy.

Alvarez received his bachelor's degree in pharmacy from Florida A&M University and his Doctor of Pharmacy from Nova Southeastern University. ■

## DONOR'S CONTRIBUTION WILL HELP DEVELOP COMPOUNDING PROGRAM

Raul Rodriguez, president of Drogueria Betances, Inc., in Puerto Rico, and a member of the College of Pharmacy Dean's Advisory Board, has donated \$50,000 to the COP Dean's Excellence Fund.

Rodriguez's contribution will help to develop a collaborative compounding program to assist practicing pharmacists in Puerto Rico and further the education of pharmacy students at NSU's Puerto Rico Regional Campus.

The donation represents the first research collaboration between a private company and the COP department at the Puerto Rico Regional Campus.

"This new research partnership will allow for exciting, new collaborative opportunities that focus on educating pharmacists and pharmacy students on strategies related to improved pharmaceutical formulation development resulting in improved patient care and outcomes in Puerto Rico," said Lisa Deziel, Pharm.D., Ph.D., dean of the College of Pharmacy.

In addition, Rodriguez has been inducted into the Fellows Society, NSU's prestigious donor recognition society. Fellows Society members receive a plaque on the commemorative Fellows Society monument located on Fellows Way on NSU's main campus and are invited to many NSU events throughout the year.

For more information on supporting the College of Pharmacy or the Puerto Rico Regional Campus, contact Terry Mularkey, executive director of development, at [tmularkey@nova.edu](mailto:tmularkey@nova.edu).

For more information about the Fellows Society, contact [fellows@nova.edu](mailto:fellows@nova.edu). ■

## PHARMACY DOCTORAL CANDIDATE ATTENDS GROUNDBREAKING EVENT

Yamel Yanez, doctoral candidate at NSU's College of Pharmacy, was selected to attend the 2015 National Association of Chain Drug Stores groundbreaking event on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., which included more than 300 advocates from across the nation. The purpose of the program is to educate members of Congress about pro-patient, pro-pharmacy policy and key issues related to health care reform. At the event held in March, participants discussed the importance of how an "issue of the day" impacts the pharmacy community. While meeting with members of Congress, students discussed issues advancing pharmacy and quality patient services. ■





### RESEARCHER DISCOVERS CERTAIN ARB DRUGS ARE MORE EFFECTIVE THAN OTHERS

Millions of people take angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs) to help treat heart failure. But not all ARBs are created equally, according to one NSU researcher's findings.

Anastasios Lymperopoulos, Ph.D., FAHA, associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences at NSU's College of Pharmacy, along with his research team, conducted a study on biological models over a seven-day period that found Valsartan (Diovan) and Candesartan (Atacand) were more effective than Irbesartan (Aprovel, Karvea, and Avapro) at preventing the increased production of the hormone aldosterone, which, if untreated, can lead to heart failure.

"This can help cardiologists and other clinicians tremendously when they are deciding which ARB drug to choose for the treatment of heart failure patients," Lymperopoulos said.

The research team consisted of Lymperopoulos's lab team at COP; another team led by Patricia McDonald, Ph.D., at Scripps Florida; and the lab team of Walter J. Koch, Ph.D., at Temple University in Philadelphia.

Their findings are published in the peer-reviewed *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* (Vol. 64, No. 25, 2014) in an article titled "Different Potencies of Angiotensin Receptor Blockers at Suppressing Adrenal  $\beta$ -Arrestin1-Dependent Post-Myocardial Infarction Hyperaldosteronism." Results of the study are also published in *Scientific Reports* (Vol. 5, Jan. 29, 2015), a journal of the Nature Publishing Group, in an article titled "Suppression of Adrenal  $\beta$ -Arrestin1-Dependent Aldosterone Production by ARBs: Head-to-Head Comparison."

The work was partially supported by an American Heart Association grant. ■

### COLLEGE OF PHARMACY 2015 STUEY NOMINEES

The Student Life Achievement Awards, affectionately known as the STUEYS, honor members of the NSU community who represent the university's core values.

Each college nominates its own finalists for the STUEYS. A winner from each category is then selected by a university-appointed committee and the overall winner in that category is chosen during an annual awards event.

Here were the College of Pharmacy's nominees for the 16th annual STUEYS.

- **Student of the Year:** Danielle Lerch, Class of 2016
- **Executive of the Year:** Goar Alvarez, Pharm.D., C.Ph., assistant dean, Pharmacy Services
- **Administrator of the Year:** Michelle A. Clark, Ph.D., chair, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences
- **Student Government of the Year:** College of Pharmacy Student Government Association
- **Staff Person of the Year:** Valentina Garcia, administrative assistant, Sociobehavioral and Administrative Pharmacy
- **Graduate Student Organization of the Year:** Student National Pharmaceutical Association (SNPhA)
- **Corporate Partner of the Year:** Target Corporation
- **Professor of the Year:** Ana Maria Castejon, Ph.D., associate professor
- **Cocurricular Adviser of the Year:** Antonia Zapantis, M.S., Pharm.D., BCPS, assistant professor, director of Experiential Education, Student Society of Health-System Pharmacy (SSHP) Adviser
- **Alumnus of the Year:** Richard Ashworth, Pharm.D., president, Pharmacy and Retail Operations, Walgreens Co.
- **Regional Campus Student of the Year:** Jaimie Velasquez



# Pharmacy News



## STAY CONNECTED WITH THE COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

Our alumni, whether new graduates or members of our first class, are part of our family and play many critical roles for NSU's College of Pharmacy, their colleagues, and the profession by staying engaged with Nova Southeastern University.

Stay connected with us and your alumni colleagues at upcoming alumni events, professional continuing education programs, and socials. The college is bursting with excitement and new destinations!

As events are subject to change, please consult our latest events posted on the College of Pharmacy's Community Calendar at <http://pharmacy.nova.edu/events/events.html>. NSU alumni events can be found at <http://nova.edu/alumni>.

We want to highlight your news and achievements. Please send alumni updates to be included in our future issues to [copalumni@nova.edu](mailto:copalumni@nova.edu).

And don't forget to update your personal information at [www.nova.edu/webforms/alumni](http://www.nova.edu/webforms/alumni). ■

## EVENTS

- **June 26**  
Florida Pharmacy Association annual meeting and alumni gathering, St. Augustine, Florida
- **July 17–19**  
Continuing Education—Physical Assessment Institute and alumni lunch/social, NSU Davie Campus
- **August 7–9**  
Florida Society Health Systems' pharmacists and alumni gathering, Orlando, Florida
- **September 19–20**  
Continuing Education—initial consultant and alumni lunch/social, NSU Davie Campus
- **October 2**  
American Pharmacist Month Distinguished Alumni Forum: "From student to alumni to professional," NSU Davie Campus
- **November 7–8**  
Continuing Education—fall classic and alumni lunch/social, NSU Davie Campus



### PHARM.D. GRADUATE APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF PHARMACY

Jorge García, Pharm.D. (2010), has been appointed director of pharmacy for Memorial Cancer Institute.

García previously served as a pharmacy operations coordinator and the medication safety chair for more than two years at Broward Health. In this role, he provided oversight of inpatient pharmacy operations, as well as outpatient pediatric and adult cancer center operations. García is also a preceptor and adjunct faculty member for NSU's College of Pharmacy in the Sociobehavioral and Administrative Science Department.

A member of the Florida Society of Health System Pharmacists, García participates in the House of Delegates on a yearly basis and as a member of the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, where he serves on the National Section Advisory Group on Leadership Development. ■

### COLLEGE RECEIVES EIGHT-YEAR ACCREDITATION

The Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education has awarded NSU's College of Pharmacy a full eight-year accreditation term, which will continue through 2023, for its Doctor of Pharmacy program.

The accreditation is one of the most important recognitions a pharmacy college can achieve. It is proof of the quality education offered at the college.

"Achieving a full eight-year accreditation term from ACPE was the result of a united effort from our students, faculty, support staff, administration, preceptors, and other stakeholders. I appreciate the passion and vision embraced by everyone at NSU COP to ensure our students receive the best education possible—an education that will prepare them for the future practice of the profession," said Lisa Deziel, Pharm.D., Ph.D., dean of the College of Pharmacy.

The accreditation is based on a series of evaluations, including self-studies, on-site evaluations, communications received from the institutions, ongoing annual review of North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination passing rates, entry class size, attrition, on-time graduation rates, and comments of the Public Interest Panel.

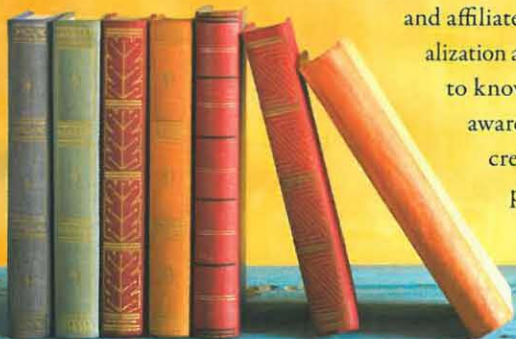
To be eligible for accreditation, the Doctor of Pharmacy program must be part of an independent college or school of pharmacy or a college or school of pharmacy within a university that is regularly incorporated and is a legally empowered, postsecondary, educational institution. ■

### HEALTH PROFESSIONS DIVISION LIBRARIAN AWARDED NATIONAL FELLOWSHIP

Dana Thimons, M.L.I.S., AHIP, reference/academic support services librarian in NSU's Health Professions Division Library, was selected as the Grace and Harold Sewell Memorial Fund Learning Partnership Fellow for the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP). Only two of these learning partnerships are funded biannually by the organization. Thimons' one-year fellowship began in January 2015.

The purpose of learning partnerships is to place experienced librarians and information professionals in leading health care or research organizations in order for both partners to gain a better understanding of how information sciences can be effectively applied in each environment.

Thimons will have the opportunity to work as a librarian in a nontraditional environment, focusing on building partnerships with the association's staff, leaders, member institutions, and affiliate partners. In this role, she will assist in the conceptualization and formation of the activation plan of AACP's approach to knowledge management. She will also work to heighten awareness and skills for the AACP staff and its members to create new knowledge about pharmacy education and pharmacists' contributions to health care. ■





# Alumni

## GENEEN GRABER MAXWELL: ALUMNA DRAWS ON BUSINESS SKILLS

BY MARY HLADKY

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Geneen Graber Maxwell reassessed her life.

Living in New Jersey at the time, Graber Maxwell was riding high in her career. She had earned a Pharm.D. degree at Nova Southeastern University in 1996, and she had embarked on a two-year research fellowship that led to a challenging job she loved at Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corp.

But in the wake of the disaster, "I decided maybe I should go back home and be closer to my family," she said. And then she stunned her South Florida family and friends by setting off on a new career path as owner of an independent pharmacy. Her work during the fellowship and at Novartis had exposed her to the business world, and it intrigued her.

She sold her New Jersey home to finance the venture and found a location in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea. Just three months later, in March 2002, she opened the doors to Dr. G's Pharmacy by the Sea along East Commercial Boulevard, just blocks from the beach. "I enjoyed being able to help people from a clinical standpoint," she said. "But I enjoy the challenge of all the different aspects of making a business successful."

Graber Maxwell had never worked as a retail pharmacist, and knew she was taking a big risk. "I always had the attitude that failure is not an option," she said. "I did my research. I learned certain things the hard way. I figured it out."

Lisa Deziel, Pharm.D., Ph.D., NSU College of Pharmacy dean, who was among Graber Maxwell's professors, said she is an example of graduates who find their way by taking unexpected routes. "While I don't think she ever thought, as a student, she

would be an independent pharmacy owner, her independence, her entrepreneurial talent, and her ambition to make a difference in the profession drove her to take on a career that would meet her goals and her personality," Deziel said.

In 2012, Graber Maxwell opened a second pharmacy, Dr. G's Pharmacy of Delray, which is located in an urgent care center at the corner of Linton Boulevard and South Congress

Avenue. The center is owned by her sister, Mylissa Graber, M.D., a board-certified emergency room physician, while her father, Ben Graber, M.D., a gynecologic surgeon and a former Broward County commissioner and state legislator, is a supervising physician.

Patients are free to take their prescriptions elsewhere, but most like the convenience of filling them at her pharmacy on one side of the patient waiting room, she said. More pharmacies may be on the way. "We have been talking about expanding," Graber Maxwell said.

Originally from New York, Graber Maxwell grew up in Coral Springs and graduated from Taravella High School. She attended

Northeastern University in Boston for two years before transferring to NSU's Doctor of Pharmacy program and earning her degree as the youngest student in the program.

The research fellowship took her to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, where she was tapped to manage a study that explored whether adding a pharmacist to a medical team would help to improve patient outcomes at lower cost. When the study confirmed the notion, she spoke about the results at national medical conferences. She also published her first chapter in a disease management and outcomes research book.







Opposite page: Geneen Graber Maxwell creates a warm atmosphere at her pharmacies. Medications are delivered in black-and-white bags decorated with labels of elixirs of the past.

Left: Geneen Graber Maxwell's second pharmacy is located in an urgent care center that is owned by her sister, Mylissa Graber, M.D. (left), a board-certified emergency room physician.

"I went from being a kid out of school to being on a national circuit," she said. "It was a great opportunity."

Jeff Borenstein, M.D., M.P.H., now vice president of content at Stanson Health in Los Angeles, was part of the team that selected Graber Maxwell for the fellowship. "Geneen is brilliant and extremely personable," he said. "She made great contributions. Without her, we would not have had sufficient organization to successfully conduct the study."

A representative of the Eckerd drugstore chain (now part of CVS Health) heard one of her speeches and sought her help in putting her research into practice at Eckerd's pharmacies.

The second year of her fellowship took her to Novartis, which had underwritten the study. There she eventually led a team that oversaw research and development and marketing and sales for the hypertension drug Lotrel, which then became the fastest-growing blood pressure medication on the market and is now a generic.

Graber Maxwell was 29 years old when she decided to come home and launch a pharmacy that would offer customers more personalized attention. While at each pharmacy, Graber Maxwell approves prescriptions before medications are handed to patients.

She learned that many people want just that. "My clientele tends to have more medications," she said. "They have questions. They need a feeling of security, a health care professional who can help guide them through the system."

She helps clients sort through their medications to make sure they are appropriate and don't put them at risk. "I have had people start crying when they see how expensive [medications] can be," she said. "I will work with the patient to find a more affordable option that will help them."

Her clientele grew by word of mouth. "I have built my business based on quality and earning people's trust," she said. "The hardest part is finding a team [that shares the vision]. I am very particular about who I have join the team."

Graber Maxwell has created an atmosphere that harkens back to earlier times. Medications are delivered in black-and-white bags decorated with labels of elixirs of the past, such as Witch Hazel and White Pine Cough Remedy. Patients picking up prescriptions also leave with a *Saturday Evening Post* calendar with illustrations by Norman Rockwell.

Her Lauderdale-by-the-Sea location features Dr. G's Java, a coffee bar that serves up cappuccinos and lattes for clients waiting for their prescriptions to be filled or who simply want to sit and chat for a while.

The inclination would be to assume that her pharmacies would cost more, but Graber Maxwell said that is not the case. She doesn't have a big infrastructure to support, and so prices are comparable, she said.

As chief executive officer and president of both pharmacies, Graber Maxwell is in charge of all operations and hiring pharmacists and other employees. But she also works as chief pharmacist at both locations several days a week to maintain contact with her clients.

Graber Maxwell has a daughter, Jordyn, 5½, and a son Gray, 4. She has enlisted her husband, corporate attorney Charles Maxwell II, into the business. He has become a registered pharmacy technician so he can lend a hand if needed.

Graber Maxwell has warm memories of Nova Southeastern University's College of Pharmacy. "I had some very remarkable professors," she said. "They really believed in me and gave me chances."

NSU has returned the compliment, recognizing Graber Maxwell with a Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award in 2009.

"She is a shining example to our current students of what you can do in the profession if you have a desire to positively impact people's health," Deziel said. "She is extremely intelligent and possesses leadership and entrepreneurial skills with a strong work ethic," the dean added. ■



# HPD News

## WALLACE NAMED DEAN OF COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE



Elaine M. Wallace, D.O., M.S., M.S., has assumed the position of dean of NSU's College of Osteopathic Medicine. Wallace succeeds Anthony J. Silvagni, D.O., Pharm.D., M.Sc., FACP dist., who served as dean for the past 16 years and will continue as a professor in the college.

Wallace has served in various capacities at the College of Osteopathic Medicine during the past 15 years, most recently as executive associate dean (2009–2015), professor of osteopathic principles and practice (2000–2015), clinical professor for family medicine (2000–2015), and staff physician for NSU's Sanford L. Ziff Health Care Center (2000–2015).

A recipient of numerous awards, Wallace received NSU's Faculty Award for Community Service (2012) and the prestigious Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award (2013), which is awarded annually by the Arnold P. Gold Foundation.

Wallace holds a Doctorate of Osteopathic Medicine from the University of Health Sciences, Kansas City, Missouri, and a Master of Science in Higher Education and Leadership from the University of Kansas. She also holds a Master of Science in Criminal Justice with a Behavioral Science Specialization and a Master of Science in Brain-Based Education, both from NSU. She is currently enrolled in the Doctor of Organizational Leadership Program at Nova Southeastern University. ■

## NSU VICE PRESIDENT APPOINTED JUDGE FOR PATENTS FOR HUMANITY PROGRAM



Gary S. Margules, Sc.D., vice president for Research and Technology Transfer at NSU, has been selected as a judge for the Patents for Humanity program in the U.S. Commerce Department's Patent and Trademark Office.

Started in 2012, the program honors businesses, inventors, nonprofit groups, and universities that leverage their intellectual property portfolio to tackle global humanitarian challenges.

"Dr. Margules exemplifies Nova Southeastern University's core values of research, innovation, and community and is well-deserving of being on this panel," said George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D., NSU president and CEO.

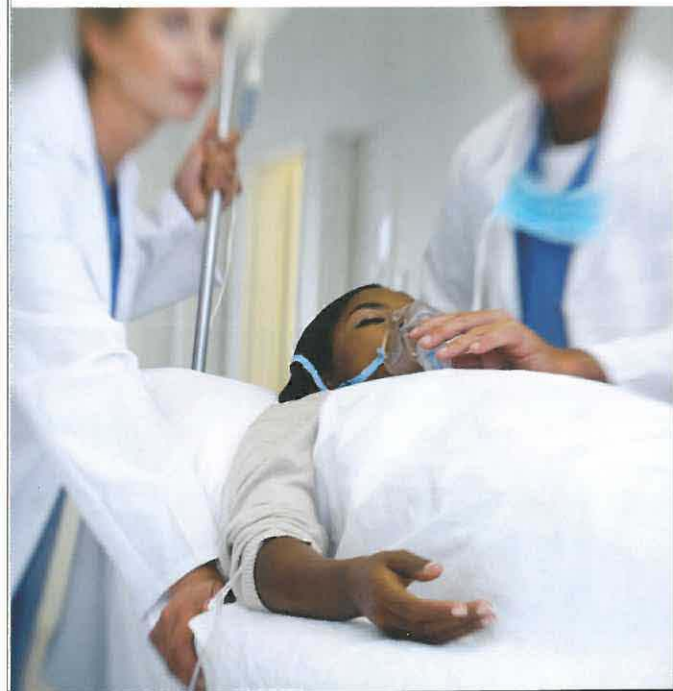
The judges review and score the Patents for Humanity award applications in the categories of medicine, nutrition, sanitation, household energy, and living standards.

Margules was appointed as NSU's vice president of Research and Technology Transfer in 2008. He has several decades of business experience in technology management, academic technology transfer, strategic planning, corporate ventures, research and development project management, licensing, regulatory affairs, clinical trials, and product development. ■

## EMERGENCY ROOM TO OPEN ON NSU CAMPUS

Westside Regional Medical Center will open an off-site Emergency Room (ER) this summer on NSU's main campus. The facility will be located at 3476 South University Drive in Davie in the University Park Plaza. The off-site ER will provide the surrounding community with immediate access to experienced, board-certified emergency room physicians; state-of-the-art imaging and diagnostic equipment; and a fully equipped laboratory. It also will offer a full range of emergency services for children and adults.

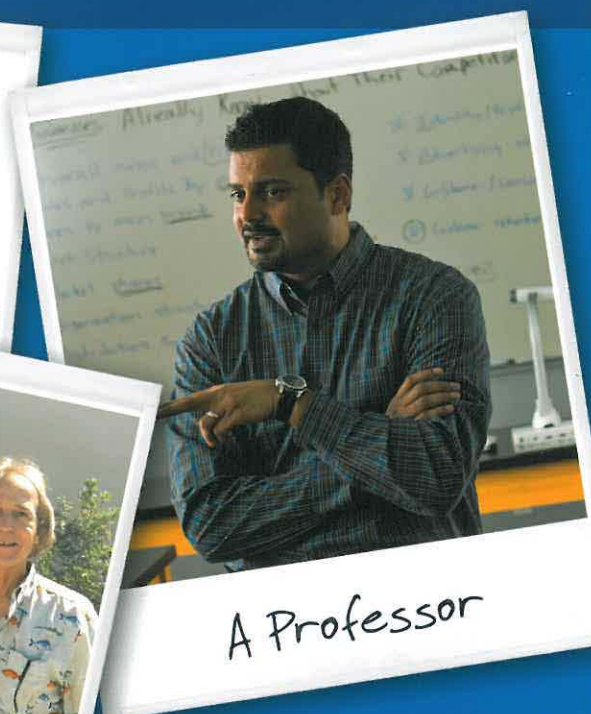
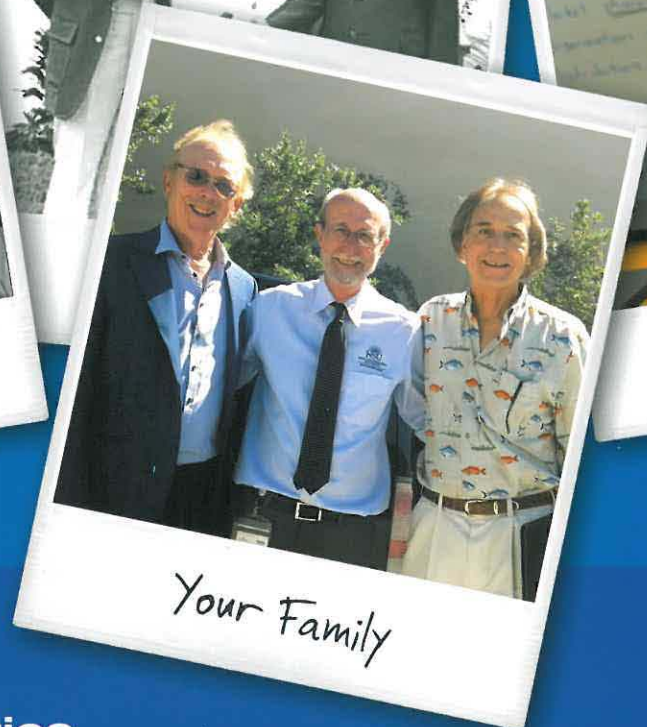
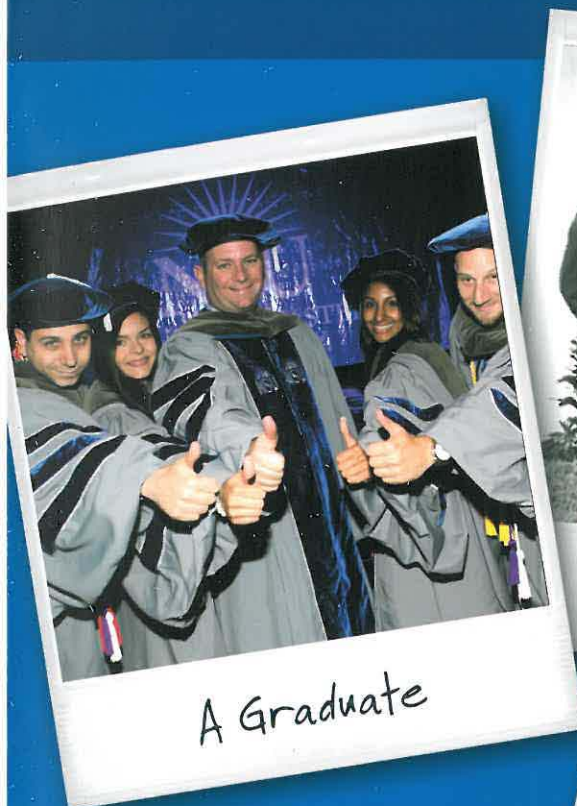
Westside Emergency Services in Davie is committed to delivering comprehensive emergency medical services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The 12,700-square-foot facility will house 16 private treatment rooms, including one designated trauma room and one triage room. Additionally, the facility will include a full-service laboratory, a pharmacy, and advanced imaging equipment—including a 16-Slice CT, Ultrasound and two state-of-the-art digital X-Ray units, one portable and one stationary. Emergency transportation will be provided to patients requiring in-patient hospital care. ■





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